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RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL OR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Letter dated 10 January 1995 from the Ambassador, Chargé d'affaires, a.i., of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia concerning the document distributed by the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations on 22 December 1994 (A/49/813).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the fifty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights, under agenda item 20.

(Signed) Vladimir Pavićević

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Annex

On 21 December 1994, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Laszlo Kovacs, in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE, made a "Statement on the situation in Kosovo" which the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations distributed on 22 December 1994.

This uncalled-for statement constitutes an abuse of the human rights theme which it purportedly relates to, as well as an abuse of the status of the Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE. It seeks to misrepresent the arrest of members of an illegal paramilitary and para-police organization in Kosovo and Metohija, created for the purpose of armed and forcible secession of a part of the FR of Yugoslavia, as "repression" and the "violation of basic human rights and the fundamental principles of the CSCE". In this connection, a reference is made to some "events" in Raška and Vojvodina, without any explanation as to what they could be related to. This unsupported statement constitutes direct interference into internal affairs and an attempt to internationalize an internal question of the FR of Yugoslavia under the pretext of concern for human rights.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary should know much better the actual situation in the FR of Yugoslavia. In that case, his statement, in line with the previous statements by the Hungarian Government, would reflect a greater degree of good intentions towards neighbouring Yugoslavia. It would be normal to expect from the Foreign Minister to supplement his knowledge with facts before making such categorical statements and before displaying such concern for, or even requesting the release of, unjustly detained persons. The function also implies the knowledge that the Yugoslav Constitution and laws guarantee human rights and freedoms to all members of national minorities in accordance with valid European and world standards. The authorities of the FR of Yugoslavia have been exerting maximum efforts also in the present conditions of unjust sanctions to ensure that all Yugoslav citizens, irrespective of their nationality, exercise all their constitutionally guaranteed rights and obligations.

It comes therefore as a surprise that a legitimate action by the authorities of the FR of Yugoslavia, taken in protection of the constitutional order, which is what any country would do in a similar situation, is presented without any foundation as a violation of human rights. No State upholding the rule of law will tolerate the establishment and activity in its territory of illegal para-military and para-police forces, least of all activity directed at a forcible destruction of its democratic constitutional order.

No matter in what capacity Mr. Kovacs has made the statement, the manner and the choice of words in which it was made are tantamount to unconditional requests from a sovereign State and constitute an unacceptable attitude towards that State and do not contribute to the development of good-neighbourly relations between the FR of Yugoslavia and Hungary. Instead of requests for an "unconditional return of CSCE missions of longer duration", it was to be expected from Foreign Minister Kovacs, in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the CSCE, to launch an initiative for the full-fledged return of the FR of Yugoslavia to the CSCE, whereby the door would be opened to new negotiations on the resumption of CSCE missions similar to those whose mandate has expired. The return to the CSCE of the FR of Yugoslavia, one of its founders, is not only in the interest of the FR of Yugoslavia and Hungary, but also of security, peace and cooperation in Europe.

As a founding CSCE participating State, the FR of Yugoslavia remains committed to all its principles. The FR of Yugoslavia is lastingly determined to develop good-neighbourly cooperation on the basis of equality, full mutual respect and non-interference, which is in the interest of all countries of the region and Europe. Such an attitude is expected from all neighbouring and CSCE participating States.

We therefore call upon Hungary to adjust its activities in international fora and organizations with its declared orientation and expressed interest to develop with the FR of Yugoslavia good-neighbourly cooperation and relations, confirmed during bilateral talks, including the meeting between the President of the FR of Yugoslavia, Zoran Lilić, and the President of Hungary, Arpad Goencz.